

WS-03478A-DS-0454



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ORIGINAL

ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION
UTILITY COMPLAINT FORM

Investigator: Sheila Stoeller

Phone: 602-542-4143

Arizona Corporation Commission
DOCKET CONTROL

2011 APR - 1 P 4: 19

RECEIVED

Priority: Respond Within Five Days

Complaint No. 2011 - 93944

Date: 3/22/2011

Complaint Description: 04B Service - Defective Equipment
N/A Not Applicable

First:

Last:

Complaint By: Candace & Cody Abbott

Account Name: Candace & Cody Abbott - accts. 32880 & 92130

Home: (217) 369-0448

Street: 12553 E. 47th Street

Work: (000) 000-0000

City: Yuma

CBR: 815-409-8429

APR - 1 2011

State: AZ Zip: 85367

is: Cellular

DOCKETED BY

Utility Company: Far West Water & Sewer, Inc.

Division: Water

Contact Name: Roxanne Fiddes

Contact Phone: (928) 342-1238

Nature of Complaint:

3/22/11: rec'd following

*****THIS LETTER SENT TO LEGAL ALSO*****

I own three lots (12543, 12553 and 12563 E. 47th Street, Yuma, AZ). We rent out five space and park our motorhome on one space.

We have noticed a foul sewer odor this winter, primarily when the wind blows out of the west (a daily event). Our evenings outside have been extremely unpleasant due to the smell.

Our renters have complained on numerous occasions and are threatening to not return to this neighborhood because of the odor. One gentleman has been forced to use Vicks in his nostrils in order to get to sleep because the smell is so predominate. Upon examination we have determined the smell is coming from the Palm Shadows Sewer Plant. Upon further examination we viewed constant travel back and forth by vehicles hauling sewage from Palm Shadows to an area directly south of the new Wal Mart and directly west of the end of 40th Street where the sewage is dumped into a manhole. At 4:30 p.m. the trucks are dumping sewage with only three (3) orange cones beside them while vehicles race by on the dirt road! This situation could be very dangerous and certainly doesn't help our odor problems.

In addition, approximately 4-6 weeks ago, my husband and I observed raw sewage escaping from a manhole located at the corner of 44th Street and Hunter. It took almost four (4) hours before the situation was cleaned up.

Additionally, the new development on 48th Street, El Cantado, has indicated that they were unaware of the amount of sewage forty (40) motorhomes would create, forcing them to haul sewage daily this winter! There was a moratorium two years ago to not allow anymore building in this development until #14 was online -- which it is not.

The same moratorium should exist for any rentals with motorhomes on this property -- waste is waste. These situations need to be addressed immediately. The odors are intolerable. The loss of rental income due to this situation is also intolerable!

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Please force Far West to use the proper chemicals to treat their sewage plant in order to minimize our discomfort and also remedy their inadequacies regarding the complete system in the Foothills.

Cody and Candy Abbott, Account # 32880 and 9213011

QUESTIONS for Far West:

Please address odor issue. When can customers expect more favorable air quality? What is being done to bring that about?

What was cause of sewage backing up out of manhole at 44th & Hunter, sometime in early Feb-late January?

Why is sewage being trucked and dumped into a manhole near the WalMart?

Is the moratorium in El Cantado still in place? Is it being enforced?

Please respond to ACC as soon as possible and also notify Customer of your findings.

4/1 -- Mrs. Abbott responded to Far West's response:

Thank you for your phone call this morning, Sheila. I am certain that FWWS would like you to believe that the reason for the smell in our area is due to the septic systems of approximately 8000 users, however we live west of Foothills Boulevard and south of 44th Street - there are no private septic systems in this area - it is all FWWS. We have a flag pole in our front yard, as do quite a few of our neighbors, seventy percent of the time, our flags are flying on the east side of the pole (obviously the wind is blowing from the west.) We may be 4 miles from Palm Shadows, however we live at the highest point between the sewage plant going east and there is no subdivision between the two. We have 3 churches, 1 bank, a funeral home and memorial garden and the Cactus Garden between Palm Shadows and Hunter Avenue...not much to "absorb" odors! They know they have a problem and we know they have a problem - they need to FIX the problem!

Candy Abbott
12553 E. 47th Street
Yuma, AZ 85367
217-369-0448
rcabbott39@yahoo.com
End of Complaint

Utilities' Response:

following received via email from Far West:

FAR WEST WATER & SEWER, INC.

March 29, 2011

Sheila Stoeller
Arizona Corporation Commission
1200 W. Washington Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

RE: ComplaintNo. 201 1-93944
Candace & Cody Abbott

Dear Ms. Stoeller,

In response to the complaint filed by the Abbott's, Far West Water and Sewer, Inc., (Far West) has investigated the matter and responds as follows:

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Far West maintains a program of maintenance under which its crews water jet and chlorinate the sewer lines throughout the Far West's service area. This program continues throughout the year, and a single neighborhood will be jetted and chlorinated several time each year. If an odor complaint is received, that area will be jetted and chlorinated again. In many cases, the cause of the odor is stagnant sewage in a line because there is not enough influent flow, which occurs as a result of residents leaving for the summer. In addition, there are approximately 8,000 privately owned septic tanks in the area, which Far West does not own or maintain. These septic tanks are sometimes the cause of the odor.

Far West has spent more than half a million dollars in odor control products and is continuously striving to control odors in all areas serviced by Far West sewer facilities. The Abbott's contend that the odors are coming from the Palm Shadows WWTP. The distance between the plant and the customer's property is approximately four miles south east of the WWTP. During the winter months, we have mostly winds that blow north which make it virtually impossible for odors to reach the point where the customer lives. Other factors that may contribute to the customers complaint is the fact that the areas north and east of their address have septic tanks and are not hooked up to the Far West sewer system. When winter visitors arrive they disturb stagnant septic tanks which in turn create odors.

In regards to the sewage backing up and out of the manhole at Hunter & 44th Street, a submersible pump in the lift station failed, tripping the main breaker which took out all power to the back up submersible pump and also the high level alarm system. Upon being made aware of the situation, operators and a clean up crew were immediately dispersed to the area and that section was barricaded and decontaminated. The problem was also resolved at that time, allowing the lift station to return to proper working condition. A copy of the report given to ADEQ for this incident is attached.

There is currently a moratorium in the Palm Shadows service area which services locations that are on the Far West sewer system from Avenue 12 E west. The El Rancho Encantado subdivision is east of that service area and is not being serviced by the Palm Shadows WWTP. El Rancho Encantado has never been under a moratorium.

The ponds at Palm Shadows were built to percolate approximately 12 feet a day; unfortunately the ponds do not percolate. After the installation of the Palm Shadows WWTP, the ponds failed to percolate. Further tests were performed, and it was found that underground clay was preventing the ponds from percolating. There is a 30 foot layer of clay underground which stops the percolation process, which in turn fills the ponds making them stagnant. Far West hauls the effluent from the ponds to a manhole designated by the City of Yuma, pursuant to a permit issued by the City of Yuma. That permit allows Far West to transport 200,000 gallons a day, seven days a week to the City sewer system. Far West pays the City for this privilege.

Please let me know if you have any frirther questions or concerns.

Thank you,

Roxanne Fiddes

Ce: Candace & Cody Abbott

February 7; 2011

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
Water Quality Compliance Section
MailCode:5415B-2
1110 West Washington Street
Phoenix, AZ 85007-2935

This letter is to notify .ADEQ. and its compliance officials of a spill that occurred on 2/5/11, at a lift station located on the corner of Hunter ave and 44th st around 9:36 AM The personnel assisting atthe spill site used the

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resources available to contain and control the leak as well as decontaminate the area of the spill.

The morning of February 5th an operator doing his daily routine of inspecting the lift Station noticed sewage on the street. Upon arrival to the lift station compound he saw the wet well cover overflowing With sewage, also sewage coming out from a manhole lid in the street adjacent to the life station. He immediately contacted his supervisor to mobilize a clean up crew to the site The operator found the lift station pump breaker was tripped. He immediately reset the breaker and the lift station pump began to lower the lift station down which stopped the spill. A Vacuum tanker truck was utilized to aid the lift station take the backed up sewage. Barricades were placed in the street to reroute traffic. A solution of chlorine was used in the compound and on the street to decontaminate affected areas: The lift station was removed and inspected: There was no' pluggage on the pump which could have caused the breaker to trip. An electrician was called out to check the amp draw and voltage on the breaker and pump. All worked as per design. There was no visible cause of what had made the breaker trip. The electrician will replace the breaker and the- contactor in case the problem is intermittent.. The estimated amount of spill was 500 gallons.

Sincerely,

Isaac Yocupicio
Waste Water Plant Supervisor

SEWER SPILL REPORT FORM
Far West Water & Sewer, Inc.
12486 S. Foothills Blvd.
Yuma, AZ 85367
(928) 342-1238

DATE: 2-05-11 _____
Time spill was reported: 9:36 am _____ Time spill stopped: 9:55 _____
Location of spill: Corner of Hunter Ave and 44th St. L.S. #25
Estimated volume of the spill: 500 gallons
Environmental sensitive areas affected: Yes No X
Public Health Threats: Yes No X

Description of the event:

Lift station #25 breaker tripped, one pump was diagnosed on Friday to be burnt out. Alarm unit was disabled due to breaker being tripped. Sewage coming out of both man holes and lift station lid. Reset pump which began pumping down L.S. Station called Don for pumper truck. He pulled 1 1/2 load. Sprinkled cl. Of ???? On leakage to include street and retention basin. Hosed off chlorinated areas.

Persons Notified: Isaac Yocupicio Time: 9:50

Cause of the Event:

Only one working pump. And tripped breaker at lift station #25.

Nemecio Corona
Operator Name Signature
End of Response

Investigator's Comments and Disposition:

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3/22: Spoke w/Ms. Abbott this a.m. and learned she had not yet contacted Far West as she hadn't had any luck with responses in past. I asked her to please attempt to talk with them and then I would file a complaint for her.

Several hours later, after first telling me she'd left a message w/Michelle of Far West, she spoke with Randy, the plant mgr. He called her and his response to her was nothing can be done about odor. They are using maximum amount of chemicals they're allowed. They can only pump 200,000 gallons a day and system is receiving more than that.

Mrs. Abbott doesn't understand with all the money paid them by their customers why they can't stay on top of things.

3/31: entered utility's response. Will call Abbott's Monday to see if response acceptable.

4/1: Have rec'd voicemail msg from Mrs. Abbott who wants to note a few incorrect stmts in Far West's letter. Will call her. Spoke w/her later in morning--she's going to email me some notes contradicting some of their letter.

4/1, later: Mrs. Abbott responded to Far West's letter with email:

Thank you for your phone call this morning, Sheila. I am certain that FWWS would like you to believe that the reason for the smell in our area is due to the septic systems of approximately 8000 users, however we live west of Foothills Boulevard and south of 44th Street - there are no private septic systems in this area - it is all FWWS. We have a flag pole in our front yard, as do quite a few of our neighbors, seventy percent of the time, our flags are flying on the east side of the pole (obviously the wind is blowing from the west.) We may be 4 miles from Palm Shadows, however we live at the highest point between the sewage plant going east and there is no subdivision between the two. We have 3 churches, 1 bank, a funeral home and memorial garden and the Cactus Garden between Palm Shadows and Hunter Avenue...not much to "absorb" odors! They know they have a problem and we know they have a problem - they need to FIX the problem!

Candy Abbott
12553 E. 47th Street
Yuma, AZ 85367
217-369-0448
rcabbott39@yahoo.com

still later on 4/1 I responded to Mrs. Abbott:

Mrs. Abbott,

Thank you for this additional information. This, as well as the rest of the information generated by your complaint, will be entered into the docket later today. These issues/problems are presently being addressed by the Commission staff. With this note to you, followed by my docketing your complaint in entirety, I will be closing your file.

Sheila Stoeller
Customer Service
Utilities Division
AZ Corporation Commission
602.542.4143

DOCKETED in WS-03478A-08-0454
End of Comments

*****CLOSED*****

Date Completed: 4/1/2011

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Complaint No. 2011 - 93944

Substantiated

Notes: